

DMAVA HIGHLIGHTS



APRIL 27, 2011



COURTESY PHOTO

Taggart chosen 2011 ANG First Sergeant of the Year

Actions during combat characterize leadership attributes

By Mark C. Olsen, DMAVA/PA

Combat seems to forge exceptional non-commissioned officers at the 177th Fighter Wing.

For the second time in four years, a 177th FW first sergeant was chosen as the Air National Guard's First Sergeant of the Year. And like the previous recipient – Master Sgt. Daniel Mitchell Jr. – this year's winner was also with the 177th Security Forces and had also served in Afghanistan.

Yet nearly a year ago, awards and honors were the furthest things from Master Sgt. Christopher R. Taggart's mind.

As the 455th Expeditionary Security Forces Squadron first sergeant, Taggart had been dealing with various types of issues, ranging from the mundane – handling emergency leave requests – to managing the convoy operations for a visit between President Barack Obama and Afghan President Hamid Karzai.

Two months into his tour at Bagram Airfield, all those details and

issues faded into the background.

On the morning of May 19, 2010, Taggart found himself in the middle of a major coordinated attack by insurgents.

The attack began like most others, with indirect fire – rocket propelled grenades and mortars, which quickly escalated into small arms fire with the insurgents attacking various points of the base's perimeter.

While under enemy fire, Taggart transported more than 200 Airmen to the fight. In the ensuing hours, Taggart led a group of Airmen in transporting nine armored vehicles to the base defenders.

"Taggart's quick and decisive actions were instrumental in eliminating enemy forces and defending the base," said Maj. Jan J. Bur-

SEE, TAGGART, PAGE 3



CAMP ATTERBURY, Ind - Spc. Joseph Barbato spots shot patterns for Spc. Johnny Sanchez while qualifying on the M240B rifle, April 12. In preparation for an upcoming deployment, these Soldiers from the New Jersey Army National Guard's 2nd Battalion 113th Infantry Regiment qualify on several crew-served weapons. (U.S. Air Force photo/Staff Sgt. Makenzie Lang)(RELEASED)



CAMP ATTERBURY, Ind. - Spc. Danny Rivera fires an M240B rifle at an 800 meter target during qualification here, April 12. As a prerequisite for deployment, Soldiers must qualify on their primary and secondary weapons. Rivera, a New Jersey National Guard 2nd Battalion 113th Infantry Regiment gunner, is from Newark, N.J. (U.S. Air Force photo/Staff Sgt. Makenzie Lang)(RELEASED)



CAMP ATTERBURY, Ind. - Spc. Johnny Sanchez loads ammunition into the M240B rifle during qualification here, April 12. In order to qualify on the M240B, Soldiers must fire at pop-up targets ranging from 400-800 meters away. Sanchez, a New Jersey National Guard 2nd Battalion 113th Infantry Regiment squad designated marksman, is from North Bergen, N.J. (U.S. Air Force photo/Staff Sgt. Makenzie Lang)(RELEASED)

DMAVA Highlights is published weekly by the Public Affairs Office of the New Jersey Department of Military and Veterans Affairs. The views and opinions expressed herein are not necessarily those of the Department of Defense, the Army, the Air Force, the National Guard, Veterans Affairs or the state of New Jersey. Letters may be sent to: NJDMAVA, DMAVA Highlights, Public Affairs Office, PO Box 340, Trenton NJ 08625-0340. e-mail at pao@njdmava.state.nj.us.

New Jersey Department of Military and Veterans Affairs
Maj. Gen. Glenn K. Rieth – The Adjutant General
Brig. Gen. James J. Grant – Director, Joint Staff
Raymond Zawacki – Deputy Commissioner for Veterans Affairs
CW2 Patrick Daugherty – Public Affairs Officer
Staff Sgt. Armando Vasquez - Public Affairs Specialist
Sgt. Wayne Woolley – Public Affairs Specialist

Battle of The Bulge survivors to reunite at Thorne Middle School

By: Jim D'Elia, Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 2179

MIDDLETOWN, N.J. -- Battle of the Bulge survivors will be together once more when the Battle of the Bulge Monument, which is presently located at Fort Monmouth, is relocated to the Thorne Middle School in Middletown.

Principal Thomas Olausen announced recently that the monument will be installed at the school and a survivors' reunion and a "rededication" ceremony will take place on Thursday, May 26.

"We could think of no better location to place this monument than right here on our school grounds," said Olausen.

Thorne Middle School is named for Corporal Horace "Bud" Thorne, a Medal of Honor recipient, who was killed in December 1944 during the battle the monument commemorates.

Surviving members of the Battle of the Bulge, from different parts of the country, will be in attendance.

Olausen further stated, "it is a wonderful honor for us to be able to host these members of the Greatest Generation and their families as we rededicate this symbol which honors the sacrifices made by so many. It will be a

lasting and productive educational tool for our students as well."

The event will start at 9 a.m. in the school auditorium and the Thorne Middle School students will read essays especially prepared for the occasion. The Corporal Thorne Award will be presented to an 8th grade student who exhibits the attributes of pride, respect, integrity, determination, and excellence, which are the standards of Thorne Middle School's Character Education Program. The school's chorus and band will participate in the event. The monument will then be rededicated in an outdoor ceremony.

Following the ceremonies there will be a reception at VFW Post 2179 in Port Monmouth.

Special awards will be given to all of the surviving members of this historic battle who are in attendance. All Battle of the Bulge survivors and their families are encouraged to register for the event.

The Thorne Middle School is located at 70 Murphy Road in Port Monmouth and VFW Post 2179 is located at 1 Veterans Lane, also in Port Monmouth.

For more information and to register for the event please call 732-233-9443 or 732-747-0160.



TAGGART

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

gess, Taggart's Security Forces commander at the 177th Fighter Wing.

For 13 hours after the attack, Taggart stayed on duty moving food and water to 106 Security Forces posts, which enable them to sustain operations.

Lt. Gen. Gilmory M. Hostage III, the commander of United States Air Force Central Command, would later assess the assault as "the largest attack on an Air Force defended base in 40 years."

The 455th Expeditionary Security Force Squadron was named Air Force Central Command's 2010 Outstanding Large Expeditionary Security Forces Unit.

Taggart received a Meritorious Service Medal for his role as the 455th's first sergeant.

It did not end there.

Burgess put together a package nominating Taggart for the prestigious 2011 Air National Guard Outstanding Airmen, First Sergeant and Honor Guard of the Year Award – quite an honor considering he was competing against first sergeants from every unit in the United States and its possessions.

On April 22, Lt. Gen. Harry A. Wyatt III, Director of the Air National Guard, announced the awardees – Taggart had been chosen.

"These Air National Guard outstanding Airmen epitomize the concept of 'Citizen Airmen' and are role models for peers and subordinates alike," said Wyatt.

Taggart, who is a detective with the Pleasantville Police Department, will now go on to compete against

his active-duty and reserve counterparts for the Air Force First Sergeant of the Year Award.





Extension of Stop Loss Special Pay

The deadline for eligible service members, veterans and their beneficiaries to apply for Retroactive Stop Loss Special Pay (RSLSP) has been extended to Oct. 21, 2011, allowing those eligible for more time to apply for the benefits they've earned under the program guidelines.

The deadline extension is included in Continuing Resolution H.R. 1473, signed by President Obama April 15, 2011, providing funding for federal government operations through Oct. 21, 2011.

The RSLSP was established to compensate for the hardships military members encountered when their service was involuntarily extended under Stop Loss Authority between Sept. 11, 2001, and Sept. 30, 2009. Eligible members or their beneficiaries may submit a claim to their respective military service in order to receive the benefit of \$500 for each full or partial month served in a Stop Loss status.

When RSLSP began on Oct. 21, 2009, the services estimated 145,000 service members, veterans and beneficiaries were eligible for this benefit. Because the majority of those eligible had separated from the military, the services have engaged in extensive and persistent outreach efforts over the past 18 months. Outreach efforts including direct mail and engaging military and veteran service organizations, social networks and media outlets, will continue through Oct. 21, 2011.

To apply, or for more information on RSLSP - including submission requirements and service-specific links - go to <http://www.defense.gov/stoploss>.

US Army Soldier show at JB MDL

Mark your calendar now for Tuesday, May 10 and don't miss this spectacular evening performance of the US Army Soldier Show at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst.

This year's theme is "Carnival - A Traveling Thank You" and it's just one night only so be sure to arrive early.

The show is free to all eligible ID cardholders and is a ninety minute live musical performance featuring talented soldiers exploring musical genre and cultures from around the world. Join us for this memorable evening of music, dance and celebration.

The doors open at 6:30 p.m. and seating is first come first served at the JB MDL Timmerman Center, Building 5441 on 8th Street at Dix. The show runs from 7:30 to 9:30 pm and is the 28th consecutive annual show of modern era.

For more information, please call 609-754-2830.

Veterans Outreach Schedule



May 7

New Jersey Vietnam Veterans Memorial
PNC Bank Arts Center, Holmdel, N.J. 07777

Outreach Event 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

NJ Vietnam Veterans Remembrance & medal ceremony 11 a.m.

May 21

American Legion Post No. 65

Lake Ave & Holly Street, Metuchen, N.J. 08840

Outreach Event Only 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

May 24, 25 and 26

Paramus Park Mall

700 Paramus Park, Paramus, N.J. 07652

Medal ceremony at 10:30 a.m. on May 24

Daily Kiosk hours 10 a.m. - 8 p.m.

RecruitMilitary seeking veterans, transitioning service members for job opportunities at vet-friendly company

RecruitMilitary is currently seeking military veterans and/or transitioning service members for employment opportunities within veteran-friendly organizations.

RecruitMilitary is a veteran-owned firm dedicated to helping veterans and transitioning service members achieve educational, career, business and franchise opportunities through their established relationships with industry associations, non-profit organizations, and government agencies.

Currently they are looking for candidates for several urgent positions within an aviation and aerospace company. The company, which is based in Mississippi, has current open positions for C-12 aircraft mechanics in Arizona, Illinois, Wisconsin, North Carolina, and Florida.

For more information about these job opportunities, please contact Mary Beth Miller, communications manager at RecruitMilitary, at 513-683-5020 or visit their Web site at www.recruitmilitary.com.